THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) to (c) India and Singapore have decided to launch negotiations towards a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. A Declaration of Intent to this effect was concluded between the Commerce and Industry Ministers and the Trade Minister of Singapore in New Delhi on April 8, 2003. The negotiations will take place in the framework of the report of a Joint Study Group, which had been set up by the two Prime Minister during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Singapore in April 2002, to study the scope and structure of a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement.

(d) to (f) The report of the Joint Study Group was presented to the two Prime Ministers during the official visit to India by the Singapore Prime Minister on April 7–9, 2003. The two Prime Ministers also discussed follow-up action on the recommendations of the Joint Study Group. The visit of the Singapore Prime Minister provided an opportunity for review of bilateral relations and for an exchange of views among the leadership of the two countries on regional and international issues of mutual interest. India and Singapore also signed a Declaration of Intent on an India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, and a Memorandum of Understanding providing for collaboration between the two countries for extending technical assistance to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, under the initiative for ASEAN Integration. The CECA, when negotiated and implemented, is expected to be of mutual benefit to both the countries in view of the extent of economic complementarities existing between the two countries.

Export of garments, gems and jewellery

3876. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRASEKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether exports from India have declined considerably particularly in garments, gems and jewellery in the year 2002-03 as compared to the year 2001-2002;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any assessment has been made in this regard; and

(d) if so, the steps that will be considered by Government to check this decline in Indian exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) to (c) As per the provisional merchandise trade data provided by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistice (DGCI&S), exports of gems and Jewellery and readymade garments rose by 22.43 percent and 7.85 percent in dollar terms, respectively, during (April–January), 2002-03, the latest period for which the data is available.

(d) Export promotion being a constant endeavour, a medium Term Export Strategy which is co-terminus with the 10th plan period (2002-07) was announced in January, 2002 with the objective of enhancing India's exports. In line with this strategy, a number of programmes/schemes have been launched which include schemes like Assistance to State for Developing Export Infrastructure (ASIDE), establishing Agri Export Zones, Market Access Initiative, strenghening "Focus LAC" programme, introducing "Focus Africa" programme, etc. In the Exim Policy 2003-04, besides, the focus on Service exports, policies have been devised to strengthen Special Economic Zones (SEZs), 100% Export Oriented Units (EOU's) etc. A new programme called "Focus CIS" has been introduced. Thus measures are being taken from time to time increase India's exports.

Legislation for SEZs

3877. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
DR. M. N. DAS :
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO :
SHRI MATI N. P. DURGA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether as part of its strategy to accelerate export growth, Government have decided to bring in a legislation to remove roadblock in Special Economic Zones;

(b) if so, whether any draft legislation in this regard has been prepared;

(c) whether all the concerned have been consulted before introducing this legislation; and

(d) if so, by when the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?